

GROUP QUESTIONS: Government and the Bible with David P Gushee

There are LOTS of options as to what you want to discuss. Use these questions/summaries as a jumping off point for whatever discussion suits your group!

1. What's your favorite winter time food or drink?
2. Take a minute to summarize with your group the main point of the message from Sunday and/or briefly share what stood out to you the most.
3. Gushee said people tend to trust each other less than they ever have. They trust elections less and less and tend to see the other side as good or evil. What are signs from your life that this is true? What are signs from your life that this might not be true?
4. Gushee suggested that losing confidence in democracy is leading people to be drawn to authoritarianism. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Discuss how this might work or not work.
5. Gushee said the text is full of how we should think about government. Choose a passage, read it together and discuss what stands out to you.
 - a. Rom. 13:1-7: Gushee's thoughts: Institution rather than individual is appointed by God. People are both sinful and have potential for good. Government deters worst instincts and encourages best instincts. Government is to serve the people, not the people for the government.
 - i. Do you think Paul would reconsider Rom. 13 after martyrdom?
 - b. Gen. 1:26-27: Gushee's thoughts: There is a God given declaration that each person has the dignity and worth that goes with being made in the image of God. This lays the groundwork for human

rights. There are things that should happen for people - food, housing, safety, etc. Government rhetoric and policy must never attack the dignity and worth of any group of people as all people are made in the image of God.

- c. Psalm 72:1-7 : Gushee's thoughts: Any just government will tend to the needs of the poor and vulnerable. It will protect them rather than only fawn over its leaders..
 - d. Matthew 22:15-22: Gushee's thoughts: There are options for how you read this text. I.e. Maybe give to Caesar what is due and what's due is nothing. Or a dualistic reading - give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.
6. Gushee said there's a vision for a good government in the text. It should be caring for the poor and the common good . Their work should be measurable. He said Christians are called to engage what happens in our world as Christian discipleship. What does this bring to mind for you?